3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

societies maintaining officially a conspiracy of silence, the stories were only standard replies by adults to children, and most adults admitted that children pursued these inquiries among themselves and found out what they wanted to know from each other.

Naming the child

After coming out of the hut and being presented to its male kin and to the elders of the village as 'the new stranger', the baby was given a name. The choice of a name was usually left to the baby's paternal grandfather. He sometimes gave it his name or his father's name, if a boy, or if a girl, his mother's name or his father's sister's name. There was no ceremony attached to naming. After the matter had been talked over by the men at the kraal gate, the grandfather came to the hut, and called the mother and child out and said, 'His name is so and so.' The personal name was seldom used in ordinary social intercourse, but in spite of this every child was given a personal name, and sometimes had added to it a descriptive name indicating that it had been born face downwards, or born a twin, or born too soon after the previous baby.

At this time of naming, the father, or more generally the paternal grandfather, prepared a 'carrying skin' for the mother to carry the baby in. It really belonged to the baby rather than to the mother, for it was used by the nurse girl to carry the baby, and she had the child in her charge most of the day. The skin was that of a goat or small calf from the herd owned by the house to which the baby's father belonged. The skin was cleaned and scraped and made soft by rubbing in fat, and handed over to the mother with some of the meat for broth, and the rest of the meat was eaten by the males of that house. The gift in time became a cloth and not a skin, as skins for wearing or household use went out of fashion. The cloth when presented however was still called a 'carrying skin' and a goat or a calf from the herd of the

having finished their task, and going off to wash in the river with more whistling and singing.

Specialized crafts

Ngoni elders said that in old days there were no specialists in the villages, except the iron workers who were mostly captured people, and that all men knew how to work in leather, wood, and fibre. By the time schools had been established and a variety of careers lay open to boys, it was rare to find ex-schoolboys taking up village crafts with a view to making a cash income from them. A few did, however, and their choice of a craft was attributed either to wishing to work with a relative, or to an inborn skill and liking for the craft. Tanning skins was one such craft, scraping them, rubbing in ashes and stretching them on frames. Cutting shields from skins and interlacing the front with different coloured skins was considered a highly skilled job. Making wooden spoons, wooden meat dishes, headrests for pillows, hafts for spears and knives, and sheaths for knives, was carried on in most Ngoni villages by two or three specialists using small sharp axes. They were assisted by a youth or two who liked the work, showed some aptitude for it and enjoyed sitting by the kraal gate, intent on their job, but missing nothing of what was going on. In remote villages many men made mats and baskets for household use and for sale and paid their taxes from such sales. Every man knew how to make bark rope for binding loads, fastening the grass on roofs, tying up beasts.

Musical instruments were another specialized craft, inseparable from being a musician and knowing how to perform on them. Small hand pianos of strips of metal on a wooden base, single stringed and several stringed lyres strung over a hollow gourd—these were solo instruments to accompany songs. A boy might all of a sudden decide to make such an instrument and learn how to play it by assiduous practice.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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been warned ahead to pound maize and make yeast of sprouting finger millet. They then embarked on a three-day cooking programme in large pots over a log fire in the compound. 'Sweet' beer with a low alcoholic content was drawn off after the first cooking, and the rest was left to simmer and ferment until it was of the correct thickness, flavour, and alcoholic strength.

Ngoni women's crafts

Formerly when the Ngoni used leather for clothing, their women took over the skins after they had been dressed, rubbed in fat and oil to make them soft, and darkened them with charcoal made of maize stalks. They then cut and sewed the circular skirts which had a number of gores. The use of cloth, bought first from the Arabs and later from European and Indian traders, entirely replaced the former leather clothing, but senior Ngoni women still had a strong preference for a heavy dark blue cloth which they thought resembled the former leather.

Two special skills were maintained by high-born Ngoni families and they carefully trained their girls in them. One was the use of beads, threaded and sewn together to form standardized geometrical patterns, many of which had particular significance as denoting a leaf, an eye, a horn of a cow. These beads of different sizes in strong colours of red, yellow, green, blue, as well as black and white, were made into headbands, wristlets, belts, collars, and the head 'waistcoats' worn by the men in their war-dances. Each Ngoni bride expected to take to her new home at least one fine basket which she had elaborately embroidered with beads in these standard designs.

The other skill to which we have referred more than once was that of beauty treatment. Ngoni women despised and disliked the local customs of facial markings and body markings. They treated their skin with clarified fat or butter, and combed their hair with long thorns or bone combs. After

7: Hodgson G-S (1926) 1933 FRS Hgmi FRS Maravi FR4

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The third day is known as tuba kabagaka.[1] In the morning more chicory is pounded and added to the others, which is boiled again to make it frothy. The process is repeated in the afternoon, and the others is left for the night.

The fourth day is called tuba kabambula, the day of mixing. Early in the morning more chicory is pounded and cooked separately. When the others is boiling well, the chicory is poured into the big pot. Then a girl cooks mince pa kpaka (bean porridge) while her mother strains the beer. Later in the afternoon they pour the beer from the big pots into the smaller pots, which are then put on one side. As soon as it is cool enough they taste it, and when it is quite cold they taste again.

The fifth day is tuba kabwana nwa, the day of drinking the beer. At early dawn it is tasted again, and after the mince pa kpaka has been added it is well stirred. It is now quite strong and is called nwa, the ordinary name for beer.

On the sixth day it is still called nwa and is good for drinking. On the seventh day it is known as mimbi and it is not so palatable; and on the eighth day—in the *ukwandi*[2] stage—it begins to go bad. It is usually consumed by the end of the sixth day; but the woman who has made it always saves a little into a small pot, which she hides away and preserves for the benefit of her husband and herself.

2. *Iron Smelting (Chewa).*

M 126 [754] [841]

When a man wishes to make a furnace he first consults a doctor (*sing'anga*). The *sing'anga* puts medicine in a stripped maize cob, and instructs a small boy to throw it at a pregnant woman. This causes her to have a miscarriage the same evening. The abortion is buried in a ruined hoop in the wood ossuary[3]; but the doctor digs it up at night, mixes it with medicine known as mbungu (lit. a thief), and buries it in a hole in the ground. The furnace is then made by working the clay into a wall rising above this hole; more mbungu is poured on to it, and a fowl is killed and also thrown on to it. If the fowl falls so that its head points to the north, the furnace is no good, and another one must be made the following month in a different place. The fowl is then plucked, roasted whole without being gutted, and eaten with their mince (maize porridge) by the people who have made the furnace. Strict continence must be observed by all the workers during the process of smelting. When the iron bars have been made, some are given as compensation to the woman who had the miscarriage, but she is not supposed to know the reason for the gift.

M 262 [834] [491]

3. *Implements of War.*

S N 714 281 ●

The *kagasi* carried shields or *ningango*, made of cowhide. Down the centre of each *ningango* runs a bamboo stick, to the top of which is fastened a cords or binding cords from the fur of the guenon cat (*mwiri*). The stick is kept in place by cross-pieces of hide known as *mutete*. Each side of the shield outside the *mutete* is called the *ngangya*. Their favourite weapons are

[1] *Kuvuta*, to get bitter.

[2] *Kwikwanda*, to be rotten.

[3] Cf. H. A. Wilson, *Journ. Roy. Anthrop. Inst.*, 1908, vol. xl, p. 241.

7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FRS Ngoni FRS Maravi FR4

N 411 N 714 281 D M 411 825 [824] [384] M 714 Their favorite weapon

the spindle or throwing spear, the shaft of which was made of mtondo or mtsipani or other hard wood. The head is bound to the shaft with copper wire; part of an ox tail serves as a grip; and at the top is a plume of goat's hair known as the chuwa. Battle axes were also used. Round his waist the warrior wore a mipepe, or kilt composed of strips of skin of leopard, wild cat, monkey, baboon or sheep—some of these straight, and others plaited and twisted. In lieu of a mipepe, a squirrel or chikwee skin *ku mata* might be worn in front with a similar covering styled chikwee chi ku mbuyo behind. These were generally made of marvel or other wild cat skins. *Njinjiri* or garters, consisting of strips of goat skin threaded with iron bells also known as njinjiri, were worn below the knee; and mikolwe or earrings of lead completed the fighting man's attire.

The Achewa also carried battle-axes, but they relied mainly on the bow (uta) and arrow (mpaliro). The favourite wood for the bow was mukwa, and the bowstring or mzinga was made from the skin of Sharpe's steinbuck or another small antelope. The barbed head (nsonga) of the arrow is bound to the bow (shaft of hunga reed) by bowstring commenced with the sap of the wild fig tree. The fork at the butt end is known as ulere, and is protected by a binding of bowstring called kwere, which is also the name for the hair of an elephant's tail. Chiefs displayed a battle breakdown styled ngwai, consisting of the feathers of the turaco, crested crane (see supra VIII, 2) and other birds sewn on to a pad of goat skin. An ukwa, or band of cowrie shells, was frequently worn round the forehead.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

PLATE XVI

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5. Drying a cow-hide at a funeral. A beast from the herd of the dead man has been killed for the mourners. The skin will be buried on top of the coffin

764
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6. Later, at the same funeral. The body has been covered and the mourners are sitting round the grave, near the cattle-byre, listening to a sermon by a local preacher of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission

[Facing P. 225]

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909)1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Nyanja FR4
Boni FR5

only implement used. Sowing is done after the first rains, about November; the harvest takes place in May to July. Gardens are at varying distances from the villages, depending partly on the soil becoming exhausted after years of cultivation. Boundaries are marked by leaving a line of uncultivated ground, sowing a line of a different crop, tying knots in the young crops at intervals, ditches, etc. In starting a new garden, woodland is often taken; the trees are cut down, leaving stumps 3 feet high; the undergrowth is cleared away and burnt, the ashes distributed over the land, which is then hoed, really very superficially; the earth is then made up into little heaps with a central hole in each, after the first rains four or five grains of the cereal (maize, millet) are dropped in each and covered with earth; as the young shoots grow the hole is more and more filled in.

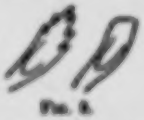

FIG. 2.

With the cereal is planted the seed of peas, beans, pumpkins, the former on coming up then grow up the maize stalks. The seed is last year's product and not specially selected.

Depredations among crops made by elephant, hippopotamus, large antelope (eland and kudu), pigs and baboons, vary in extent in different districts. Little grass huts are built, raised above the ground like a pile-dwelling, in which watchers are stationed. Fences, sometimes extending for miles, are built. The gardens of the chief are hoed by his slaves or the people of the village. Maize is collected in the cob, and after the outer coverings have been removed is stored, as in the shadow, millet in the head; beans and peas are stored in baskets. Medicine is put on the ground to remove a good crop, and a piece of stick is sometimes hung up for good luck.

CATTLE, ETC.

The keeping of cattle is practically restricted to certain tribes living in districts free from tsetse-fly (Angoni, Wankonde); among these people wealth is reckoned by cattle. The milk is little used; the flesh is eaten only when an animal dies. Marks of ownership are made by cutting the ears (Fig. 6). Cattle are kept in open kraals by Angoni, in a compartment of their houses by Wankonde; they are tended by the small boys as a rule. Goats and sheep are kept all over the country. Castration of cattle is a recognised practice (Nyhiru).

Angoni make their shields from cattle skins; their spear handles are covered with goat hair (beard); hair anklets and armlets in dancing costume are made from goat hair. Skins are used as dress to a small extent.

HUNTING.

A man intimates to the community around that he is making a hunt by shutting a boy of about ten years in his house, who provides him and the men from his own village through adjacent villages; at each village the lad has to lie down and

M 283 [534] String is used to make their fishing nets, necklaces, and other headwork. For bow strings tendo achillus is used, also strips of skin, sinews. On their musical instruments ordinary string or gum is used to form the strings.

M 482 Needles made of sharpened bamboo were formerly used, the blunt end being shaved into a pulp and then interpenetrated with shaved end of the string.

M 285 Netting is done in the ordinary way with a simple shuttle.

Leather.

M 281 The skins of their domestic animals—cattle, sheep, goats—and of antelopes and leopards are prized. No fish skins are used. Skins are removed from the animals by a median ventral incision and other incisions along the inner sides of the legs. The Yao leaves the hair on the skin, some Chipeta remove it. The only treatment a skin gets is scraping and drying in the sun, then rubbing with stones and beating till worked soft. This is done by the men. I have only once seen an ornamented skin, that of a sinicuago from Lake Bangweolo, North-east Rhodesia. Skins are but comparatively little used, occasionally to sit upon. In German territory every chief sits on a leopard skin. They are used of course to cover drums, make bags for carrying a supply of grain, and to make bellows for the metal-worker. The skins of small animals are used as purses and tobacco pouches. Among the Angoni and Chipeta they are used as kilt-girdles, also to support the baby on its mother's back, and of course to make shields.

Dyeing.

M 286 There is practically none. The root of a certain tree is soaked with grasses to give them a black colour, to be used in making mats with patterns; this process has been learned, I think, from the coast.

At Likoma, the root of the red mivivi tree is boiled in water and the decoction used for staining, and, I think, strengthening their fishing nets. Dyes are not used for any part of the body.

Painting.

M 292 332 Recently decoration of the outsides of their houses has come into fashion, red earth and lime being used to depict men, cattle, antelope, crocodile and tortoise. Often merely geometrical designs are made, I think by Mohammedan coast people.

Stone-work.

M 329 No stone implements are used, except stones for grinding maize, some small pans and mortars. There is a lump of stone at Fort Anderson on which holes have been made for playing the oware game.